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ORANGE FEATHERS »



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Coto de Caca

An open letter to Real Housewife Vicki Gunvalson about her new boyfriend, retired dirty cop Steve Chavez Lodge
BY GUSTAVO ARELLANO

Dear Vicki:
I gotta start off by saying I've never been a fan. Throughout your decade-long run on *The Real Housewives of Orange County*, you have continually come off as the mother hen from hell, relishing your role as the longest-lasting cast member to throw all sorts of shade on whatever new girl joins the show. You simply refuse to listen to others, as evidenced by last season's disaster that was you standing by your now-ex, Brooks Ayers, despite your daughter and friends telling you he wasn't what he seemed to be. And you hectoring that naked sushi model during Tamra and Eddie's party for their workout video, telling the poor girl to "put some clothes on and go to college" and that the model's mother "would not be proud of" her? Stick to fighting with Meghan Edmonds.

Nevertheless, I write to you as a mission of mercy. I must admit that I haven't been watching *The Real Housewives of Orange County* this season, namely because *Southern Charm* is so much better (do you think T-Rav and Landon did it? Sure seems like it!). But I recently learned about your love life after seeing you on the June 20th episode of *Watch What Happens Live*, and not in a pleasant way: As Andy brought up your "new, mysterious boyfriend Steve," a picture from my past flashed on the television that made me choke on my chile relleno burrito. Your new guy is none other than Anaheim city council candidate Steve Chavez Lodge, one of the worst political choices this year—and in this era of Trump, I don't say that lightly.

Girl: Run. Lodge is nothing but bad news, and everything wrong with the current election cycle—and I don't think you know anything about him. After seeing *Watch What Happens Live*, I Googled the two of your names together, and found glowing story after glowing story in the tabloids about how Lodge is a former paratrooper and retired police officer and consults for a public affairs group and how he's dreamy. I saw Instagram posts of you beaming with Lodge. But none of these stories had the background I'm about to tell you, the background the *Weekly* helped expose four years ago, the last time Lodge ran for Anaheim council—and the last time he should've shown his shit-eating grin in public life.

First, let's start with his name. Throughout most of his professional career, Steve went by the last name Lodge. That's how he was referred to in the various media stories about his career as a Santa Ana cop



WHAT ANAHEIM THINKS ABOUT LODGE & HIS PAL

GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

(more on that in a bit), and that's the only last name on the URL for his Facebook account—the 21st century's best window into someone's soul. Yet in 2012, Lodge decided to run for city council using his birth surname, Chavez. While he has every right to do so, the timing was the epitome of cynical: Anaheim was making international news at the time for a lawsuit that sought to create voting districts in an effort to get more Latino councilmembers, and everyone saw Lodge's newfound love for his Latino surname as the desperate Hispandering that it was. He's continuing that effort this year, having moved from ritzy Anaheim Hills to District 1 in West Anaheim. To put it in terms you can understand, Vicki, it's like moving from Coto de Caza to Lake Forest.

Lodge is a favored candidate of the cabal run by former mayor Curt Pringle that wants to make Anaheim into a vassal state of Disneyland, but I'm sure that doesn't bother you. Maybe this will: Lodge was a dirty cop. In 1993, San-Tana (what you'd know as "Santa Ana" although you probably don't dare venture north of Javier's at the Irvine Spectrum) bar owner Elba Freeman sued the San-Tana Police Department in federal court because she alleged that officers harassed her, her bar, and her patrons after Freeman filed a complaint against an officer. The cop in question? Lodge. Freeman said that in 1985, Lodge "pushed her and used foul language during a routine bar check," according to a *Los Angeles Times* account, which also noted Lodge "served a four-hour suspension for the incident."

Freeman ended up losing her case, along with an appeal to the U.S. Ninth District Court of Appeals. Lodge wasn't as lucky, however, with a case involving a jaywalking Iranian immigrant that made national headlines. In 1990, Hossein Farahani sued Lodge in U.S. federal court alleging police brutality. Farahani had jaywalked across Fourth Street in SanTana, much to Lodge's irritation. He turned on the siren; Farahani ran and tried to hide behind a wall. Lodge went after him; afterwards, Farahani was left with a ruptured disc and a baton wound that required eight stitches, a wound that Lodge's defense said just somehow got there and that his client had nothing to do with.

The federal jury didn't agree with Lodge, rewarding Farahani a whopping \$612,000 settlement. "People laugh when I say for jaywalking they beat me up," Farahani told reporters after the verdict. "It's not funny. Everybody can be beaten by them. They are dangerous." Lodge and his attorney vowed to win on appeal, but that didn't happen—instead, they settled with Farahani for \$292,000 and dropped the case.

That's not all your beau has done. Two other lawsuits were filed against Lodge in the 1990s alleging brutality (both were dismissed). In 2003, Jimmy Plazola filed a million-dollar lawsuit in federal court alleging Lodge had him wrongfully imprisoned for over a year in a murder case. "Envisioning himself as a latter-day Eliot Ness," the complaint read, "Lodge was bent on re-opening 'cold cases' by arbitrarily charging Hispanic individuals as suspects, using every means within his power, including

illegal means to extract bogus 'confessions,' manufacture evidence, and display a reckless disregard for proper investigation of exculpatory leads—all in an effort to obtain convictions, to make a name for himself as a triumphant investigator and solver of unsolved murder cases." Plazola's case went nowhere, and you probably don't care about the life of a working-class Mexican from SanTana who says of your Steve, "If he's able to ruin people like [Lodge did to Plazola], what's he going to do to people while in office?" But you should care—as Meghan would say—because, justice.

One thing I *have* admired about you, Vicki, is that you're a self-made woman due to your savvy in the insurance industry, so I'm sure you can appreciate it when I say that there's no premium that makes Lodge worthy of your hoo-ha. But since you don't listen to reason, let me try your daughter, Briana. Briana: I'm glad you're back in Orange County instead of the hellhole that is Oklahoma. You once treated my wife in the emergency room of a local hospital, and we saw then how humble, hard-working and good you are. You more than anyone know the horrible dating choices your mom commits, and Vicki says you are a fan of Lodge. Take it from me: He doesn't deserve your mom.

Back to Vicki: So can I get a good insurance rate from you for this letter? Lemme know, and screw Brooks!

GARELLANO@OCWEEKLY.COM

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ask a mexican!»



» GUSTAVO ARELLANO

DEAR MEXICAN: Why do SO many *chamacos* of this generation, that are Mexican, refuse to learn Spanish and/or speak it? What's the big deal? Are they THAT embarrassed of their native tongue because they've been so Americanized, or what is it? It's been bugging me for years! I'm Mexican-born and raised in San Diego, and grew up quite differently from most Mexican kids, I guess, but I never backed down to speak, read, write and learn Spanish. *Osea, que conejos con está generación? Cachanillo, ¿Y Que?*

DEAR POCHO: Sure, the Pew Hispanic Center and other survey-happy think tanks publish study after study showing how quickly children of Mexican immigrants learn English, and how fast they begin to favor that *idioma* instead of *habla*. But the fact remains that it's more acceptable than ever for people to speak Spanish, especially given we're in the end stage of Reconquista. And still, Mexican kids end up becoming English-dominant, as they always have in post-World War I America. Why? Because despite what Univision wants you to believe, English is how you win in *los Estados Unidos*—and win we must. Besides, what's wrong with Mexican kids losing the ability to speak Spanish? Sure, being bilingual is great, but a lack of Spanish doesn't somehow make you less Mexican—just ask Cuauhtémoc.

DEAR MEXICAN: When I was a small child of a poor farm family in Oklahoma, we started to have visits from an extended family of about a dozen persons who were following harvest work from the border northward. They would stop again on their way south when harvest was over. Our farm was on a river, and our

cabin had lots of shade and space for them to set up their tent and make the campfire. My mother always welcomed them and we nine children were delighted to find these friendly brown children to play with. Mama would give them corn and tomatoes and sweet potatoes from our garden. They, in turn, would show my mother how to make flat bread on the cooking fire, and how to use very hot peppers in cooking. I regret that the way to cook that flat bread was not passed on to me. I wish someone could tell me how to cook that bread. It would remind me of the great joy and delight we all felt when we saw them coming down our road from the high Dust Bowl plains.

"The Mexicans are coming! The Mexicans are coming!" we shouted, and it was a great moment in our lives twice a year for three or four years in the thirties. Most of the Mexicans I encounter now are doing yard work or picking fruit here in Florida. Each time I see a brown face, I greet them with a smile and think of those wonderful people that I have always considered as amigos. If anyone can give me a recipe for making the flat bread like those amigos made it, I would be most grateful.

Okie from Kissimmee

DEAR GABACHO: Flat bread? You mean a tortilla, right? Your letter is sweet, so I'll spare you any further ridicule other than to note, as I always do when talking about Oklahoma, that the state should unconditionally support undocumented immigrants since it was founded by those dirty illegals called Sooners.

ASK THE MEXICAN

at themexican@askamexican.net, be his fan on Facebook, follow him on Twitter, or ask him a video question at youtube.com/askamexicano!

HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

Officer Frisky

You were the officer who detained me in the park on suspicion of being a sex criminal. You did this because I had a copy of the *OC Weekly* in the passenger seat next to a bottle of sunscreen. You also noted that my window was down and the driver's side was partially open. While waiting for the backup officer, you explained your theory: I was using the "sex magazine" to get off and intended to use the sunscreen as a lubricant for my self-abuse while I waited for a female to enter the park, whereupon I would expose myself or possibly even commit rape. The open window and door were my attempt to cool down from a perverse passion that had already reached the boiling point. Long story short, Inspector Holmes: The aggressive frisk, auto search and background check that followed turned up nothing incriminating. You wasted your time subjecting this elderly Leisure World resident to a humiliating ordeal. So it was almost amusing when your sergeant and the backup officer agreed that your initial suspicion justified a thorough investigation and no apology was necessary. Park pervs, beware! The Barney Fifes of the local police department are sure to nail you, especially if you are unfortunate enough to be caught with the *Weekly* in your sweaty palms.

HEY, YOU! Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey, You!" c/o *OC Weekly*, 18475 Bandler Cir., Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com.



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FOREVER BLAIRING OUT

ERIC BLAIR CELEBRATES 20
YEARS OF THE LOUDEST CABLE
ACCESS SHOW IN OC HISTORY

BY NATE JACKSON

Eric Blair has sacrificed a lot for the music he loves. Probably more than we deserve to know. But whatever Blair's dedication to music costs him in fame and groupies, he makes up for it in respect from local viewers who've watched him bring insightful, in-depth interviews with the world's most respected musicians and celebrities to the doldrums of OC's cable access stations for the last two decades.

"That's never gotten me laid though,"

Blair says jokingly. "There's one time I was with this girl who saw the Asia poster in my bedroom and immediately put her clothes on, got in her car and left. Her tires literally did a burnout in front of my house."

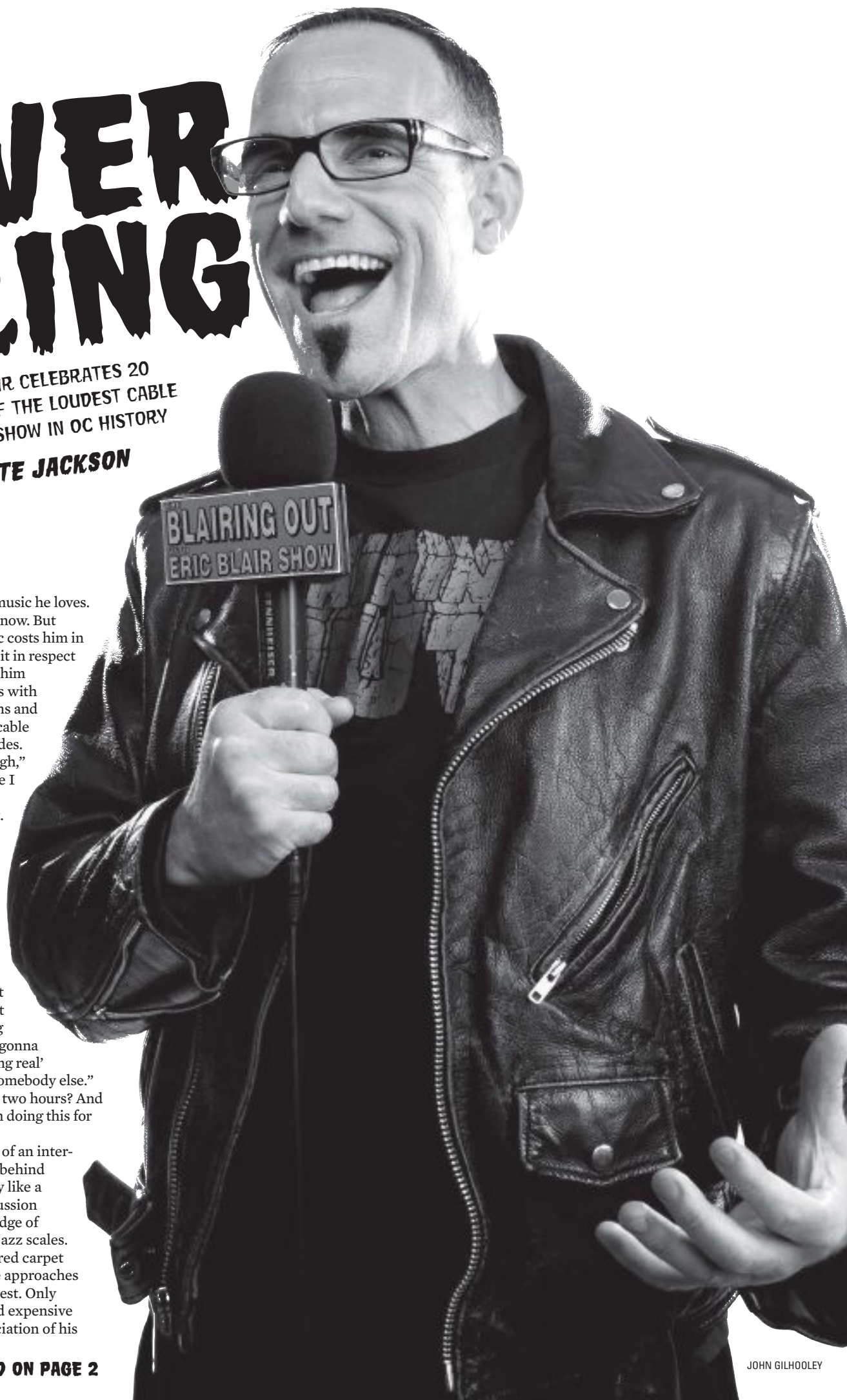
This month marks the 20th anniversary of *The Blairing Out Show With Eric Blair*. What started as just another cable access show in 1996 blossomed into an OC staple, mostly for music buffs who were looking for the deepest info they could find on their favorite artists. As the host, Blair always prided himself on asking his guests offbeat, personal questions while extracting the kind of stories and info you won't find on Wikipedia.

"I think Eric kinda kept me on my toes," says OFF! front man Keith Morris, who spoke with Blair extensively about his involvement in the controversial lawsuit between Greg Ginn and past members of Black Flag in 2013. "He wasn't gonna let me just slide off real easy. ... I believe 'Gimmie something real' could be Mr. Blair's fucking tagline. Save the bullshit for somebody else."

"People ask me why are you interviewing so-and-so for two hours? And I'm like because that person has fans," Blair says. "And I'm doing this for the fan, to give them the ultimate experience."

Blair feels most like himself is when he's in the middle of an interview. Caffeinated wit and charm crackle like spark plugs behind his eyes. After every question, he smiles and nods intently like a tweedy, armchair therapist. He bides his time in the discussion and picks the right openings to flex encyclopedic knowledge of music trivia that rattles effortlessly off of his tongue like jazz scales. Whether it's a backstage sit down or a few moments at a red carpet award show, his raspy voice surges with excitement as he approaches music icons with the charisma of a punk rock Ryan Seacrest. Only instead of a major league budget for dental whitening and expensive suits, he's got an insane amount of knowledge and appreciation of his favorite bands, even the cheesy ones.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



FOREVER BLAIRING OUT

» FROM PAGE 9

On a recent sunny day at the Tustin Market Place, he sits at a table outside Starbucks clutching a bright orange Monster Energy drink. The towering can of caffeine stands out against his all-black attire. He sports horn-rimmed glasses and a tightly shaped crew cut. His lips are underscored by a manicured triangle goatee. The comfortably worn-in Ramones-style leather jacket on his back is a relic from 1992 that he bought during his days as a long-haired, thrash metal miscreant. "This jacket has seen everything," he says, having worn it to the bulk of his interviews. "Man, if this thing could talk."

It's fitting that the host uses the term "Blairing Out" to describe his own personality, a cocktail of charm, neuroses and hyperactivity that can sometimes make you feel like you're in a TV show when you stand next to him, whether you're on or off camera. For those who know him, the fact that he shares his birth name with George Orwell doesn't come as a surprise.

"I like Eric and I always like doing something with him," T.S.O.L. front man Jack Grisham says. "It's always like being on 'shrooms a little bit ... He's like Adam West meets Troy Donahue, it's trippy. But he's not in any way ashamed or pretentious, he's just Eric. I'm surprised a major network hasn't snapped him up."

Since he started the gig in cable access, Blair always dreamed of taking his career to the mainstream. And despite the people in his life who've told him he'll never succeed, in his mind he's always just one big opportunity away from getting the spotlight he deserves.

"You get kicked around a lot when you're not some brand name like Ronald McDonald or Rolling Stone," Blair says. "That's a big part of [what drives me]. I want to succeed [with the show], and be able to say 'Everyone said it couldn't happen, but it did.'"



PROVIDED BY ERIC BLAIR

THE DAPPER CRATE DIGGER!



Blairing Out was always part of Blair's personality well before the TV show. In 1980, instead of a microphone and a camera, the Tustin native used a cranked up ghetto blaster to get attention.

"That thing was invincible," Blair says, referring to the Panasonic Platinum stereo with five-inch woofers. His parents gave it to him as a gift on his 17th birthday.

He bought Maxell recordable chrome cassettes and filled them up with his favorite AC/DC, Van Halen, and Black Sabbath tunes. A friend would max out the EQ on the tapes for him to make the sound punishingly loud.

One quiet Sunday, Blair decided to test out the stereo's demonic decibels on a nearby Mormon church during a crowded morning service. "I ran into the church cranking my ghetto blaster playing 'Neon

Knights' by Black Sabbath," he says. "I held it up and I remember everyone looking around in horror." The woofers of the stereo rattled as Ronnie James Dio's devilish, operatic howl echoed off the hallowed ceiling and painted-glass windows. Within seconds, two refrigerator-sized male congregants got up from their seats and charged at him, their suit tails flapping behind them. Blair tried to escape, but the Linebackers of Latter Day Saints pounced on him and proceeded to kick him out of the building. They confiscated his stereo, which the church held hostage until Blair's father could come pick it up.

Situations like these weren't exactly out of the ordinary for Blair, who had extreme ADD and anger toward authority growing up. His parents sent him to a number of experimental schools for troubled children. But according to Blair, the schools sometimes felt more like being in juvie.

"The school psychologists would always tell me, 'You have no future, you're never gonna amount to anything,'" Blair says. Weekly group therapy sessions with a handful of kids and a psychiatrist would often end in fist fights between him and his classmates. "I got sick of it after a while and I said I'm fighting back. And I learned about using weapons. Whatever I could find, I was using it," he says.

In high school, he found religion. Well, actually he just made one up—a heavy metal faith he called Dioism. As the name suggests, it was based on his worship of the Medieval metal god Ronnie James Dio of Elf, Rainbow, Black Sabbath and Dio fame.

The creation of Diosim and T-shirts proclaiming "Death to All Born Again Christians" were the staples of his teenage existence. His weekly sacrament involved sneaking backstage at concerts. In 1982, he finagled his way to the green room at Perkins Palace in Pasadena to meet Mötley Crüe with nothing but a camera and a

laminated badge he stole from his mom's workplace. The stunt paid off. He remembers striking up a conversation with Tommy Lee, drinking beers with the band and getting them all to sign a copy of the adult mag *Oui*, which contained the first magazine interview the band ever did.

"I was a kid," he says. "When you're a kid you're thinking about instantaneous stuff. But music was everything to me, that was my salvation."

Despite his wild ways, Blair actually had his first real experience with religion while watching a band practice in a stuffy garage.

A father of one of Blair's friends brought him and a few other kids to see Michael and Robert Sweet jam at their parent's house in La Mirada right before they became known as Stryper. Even before they became OC's most famous Christian metal band, kids from their neighborhood would come watch them practice. The crowd often spilled into the street outside the Sweet family home. The Jesus-loving metalheads famous for throwing out bibles during their shows made an impression on 19-year-old Blair.

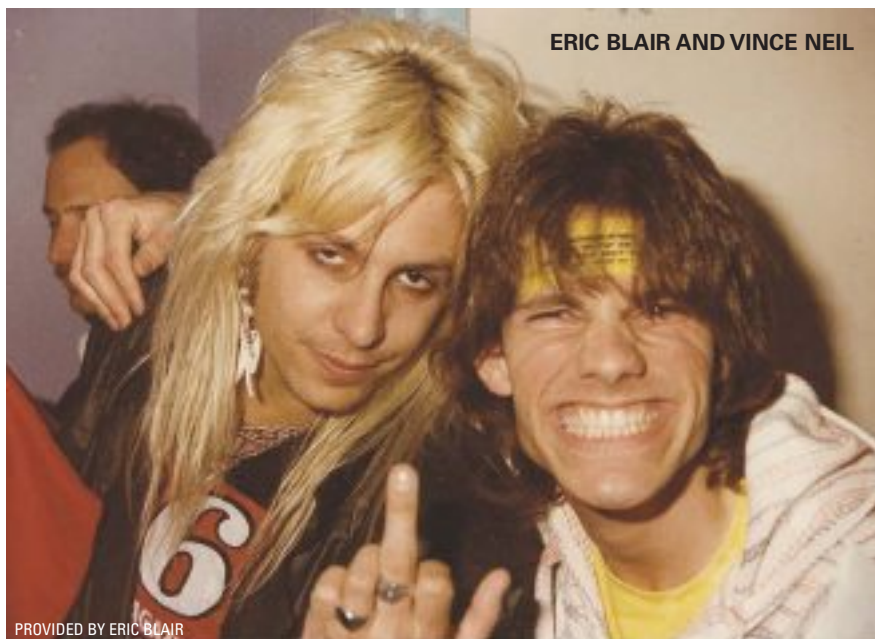
"All their songs were boldly about the gospel message, to me that was like 'Whoa these guys are hardcore,'" Blair says. "They're getting up there and rocking like Mötley Crüe but they're talking about Jesus."

He signed on to become a roadie for the band and toured with them for a year and a half. They continued to blow up, and Blair found himself surrounded by the who's-who of hair metal as Stryper played sold-out arenas and shared the stage with RATT, Bon Jovi and Poison.

During this period, his loud mouth and hyperactive social skills earned him a nickname that stuck.

"Janice Sweet, the momager for Stryper told me once, 'You're always blaring out, in fact that should be your name because whenever you open your

ERIC BLAIR AND VINCE NEIL



PROVIDED BY ERIC BLAIR

mouth you're just Blairing Out all the time," Blair says. He took the name and used it to form his own Christian thrash band Blairing Out, which he was in for five years. Footage of the four-piece band still lurks on YouTube. Their song "Porno People" features Blair headbanging with a heavily Aqua-Netted '80s mullet while screaming at the top of his lungs about sinful porn stars frying in hell. While most religious rock acts felt more like pious praise music with shredding guitar, Blairing Out's sound showcased a more confrontational side of Christianity.

"I felt like if Slayer and Venom could write songs about worshipping the devil, why can't I sing songs about you're going to hell if you don't worship Jesus," he says. "If they can do it, why can't I do it?"

The band broke up in 1991, despite being offered a record deal by the now defunct Christian label Frontline Records. Blair says he used some of his connections and his band's pull in the Christian rock world to help other bands in his genre, like Guardian, get record contracts. But due to some health issues and the fact that bands like Nirvana were already taking over radio, Blair realized his music career wasn't destined to pan out. However, that wouldn't stop him from getting the chance to hold a microphone in front of a TV camera.

Under the glare of a handheld LED spotlight, Blair sits in a rumbling, mini tour bus behind Malone's Bar and Grill in Santa Ana. He's holding his signature mic flag for the show with the words "Blairing Out with Eric Blair" written in bright green on his lap. Today's interview is with Tommy Victor, lead singer and guitarist of seminal New York metal band Prong and former guitarist for Danzig, who is headlining the club in a few hours. The light and small camera on a tripod is juggled by his brother Evan, a taller, huskier spitting image of his brother. Though "Blairing Out" is Eric's creation, Evan—a local consumer advocacy attorney—was

always there to help the show in any way he could, including filming, holding lights or driving Blair to and from his interviews with musicians and other celebrities over the years.

"When you are busy working for the show you focus on each interview in front of you," Evan says. "You don't really see the change and progress because it is slow change and you are too close to the evolution and growth. Then one day you are at a sit-down interview or a red carpet interview and someone walking the red carpet states they know Eric and are taking cellphone photographs of Eric on the other side of the red rope. At that point you realize how much Eric's produced shows have reached the public."

Blair also managed to rope in another friend to hold the cue cards of scribbled questions for the Victor interview. He shuffles through the questions off camera as Blair fires them away one by one at Victor.

"Do you believe in Hell, and if so is Hitler rotting there?"

"If you could solve any injustice in the world, what would it be?"

"Is Glenn Danzig the Donald Trump of rock & roll?"

Most TV hosts often stick to the same flaccid album cycle questions that don't attempt to challenge the artists. But Blair insists that each interview is an opportunity to get his guests to reveal true thoughts as artists and deep thinkers.

"I'm not here to make a rock star or a celebrity look bad," Blair says. "I'm here to give them a chance to answer the question and let the fans see who they really are."

The same level of gusto is what inspired him to venture into public access 20 years earlier. After coming home from a party at 3 a.m., Blair was flipping through channels in the warm glow of the TV when he caught a commercial offering slots for viewers to start their own public access show through Continental Cable.

By 1996, the 30-year-old Blair was used to being on the road with rock stars,

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

ART SCULPTURE

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PROVIDED BY ERIC BLAIR

FOREVER BLAIRING OUT

» FROM PAGE 11

interned at Interscope Records, and had had his concert reviews published in local magazines. He had all the life experience he needed, despite having none of the technical skills. He'd even busted his ass to get his aestheticians license from Fullerton College and worked as a makeup artist and instructor (a gig he still holds today).

Blair contacted Continental Cable (now Time Warner) days after seeing the TV ad and submitted a short treatment for *The Blairing Out Show With Eric Blair*. The station execs agreed to put him on the air. With a lot of luck and the help of a few industry connections and benevolent publicists, Blair got a chance to interview big artists consistently throughout his career. His third interview for the show was Ronnie James Dio himself, backstage at the Coach House in 1997. But instead of approaching Dio like the high school fan-boy who once named his personal religion after him, Blair broke the ice the most professional way he knew how.

"I made him laugh," he says.

After cracking a few jokes, their recorded interview was smooth sailing, as Dio lounged on a couch sipping a glass of wine and regaled Blair with stories about his friendship with Ritchie Blackmore in Rainbow; joining Black Sabbath; and his favorite bands at the time (Soundgarden, Tool, Napalm Death).

"Ronnie would do lots of interviews and most of them would all sound the same, but Eric always thought of unusual and off-the-wall questions to ask him and Ronnie greatly enjoyed that," says Dio's widow and former manager Wendy Dio. "I vowed when Ronnie passed away to keep his legacy alive and I hope Eric stays in my life for many years to come because he was always a great supporter of him and everything he did."

Being on camera always came easy to Blair. However everything else about public access was a constant struggle. Various bosses during his time at cable access (which changed names and owners sev-

eral times) were known to cuss him out and ridicule him and his show. "I think a lot of people in cable access were failed; they had a dream and they ended up not living their dream," Blair says.

To top it off, the recording equipment, which he taught himself how to use, was in constant disrepair. He remembers his first time interviewing Lemmy Kilmister later on in 1997. As soon as Blair's camera guy pressed the record button on the three-quarter-inch tape machine, the button broke and Blair had to push it back in with a pencil eraser.

In order to get his show into different cable access markets, for years Blair would duplicate dozens of rolls of three-quarter-inch tape and hand mail them to stations with postage paid out of his own pocket.

Despite the obstacles, he says cable access colleagues like sportscaster Bob Gibson and former bosses Linda Maxwell and Preston Hayslette were the few cherished supporters.

His talents didn't go totally unnoticed back in the day. The *Weekly* showed Blair some love, naming *The Blairing Out Show With Eric Blair* the Best Cable Access Show in 1998 in our annual Best of Orange County issue.

All the endless work behind the scenes helped his reputation as an interviewer and a go-to source for publicists and labels who wanted to land interesting interviews for their artists. Since he started, Blair's done well over 2,000 interviews with everyone from Jerry Only of the Misfits to Britney Spears on the red carpet. No matter who he was interviewing, it was always the same style of questioning that aimed to pitch out interesting, personal or stange questions that caught his subject's attention.

"[He] operates outside the box, is deeply researched and therefore delivers an entertaining and informative piece of journalism for his viewers and our fans," says classic rock vocalist Graham Bonnet, who did an interview with Blair last March.

Blair was also one of the first people to seek out and interview Katy Perry, Fall Out Boy and My Chemical Romance before they became international superstars, making the show a valuable time

capsule of pop culture.

Unfortunately, as California had done away with the bulk of cable access channels by 2013, Blair got a notice from Time Warner saying that they were cutting back resources, cutting shows and laying people off. He'd have to find a new route to continue doing his show, which meant transferring everything over to his Blairing Out YouTube channel. To this day, he continues to make new episodes and upload as many classic interviews as possible.

Although he's only been able to upload about a third of all interviews he's produced during the course of the cable access show, he says it's worth the trouble when he sees audiences comment on his interviews.

"I think it's definitely affirming," Blair says. "You know what you created and then someone will comment and go, 'Hey, these questions are great.' And then you can say 'Yes, this person gets it.'"

The biggest interview so far is the one he did with tattooed, lesbian Australian model and TV personality Ruby Rose at the Newport Beach Film Festival in 2014. So far it's garnered over a million views.

"Looking at it on the [YouTube] analytics map, you see that the interview's been watched as far as the deserts of Iraq," he says. "It's a little mind blowing."

Though it's been a long road, there are still days that remind Blair he always has the potential of achieving success in the entertainment world. On a recent Sunday afternoon, he's

sitting near the balcony of a tree-covered mansion nestled in Beverly Hills. Beside him is his latest interviewee, a mod-lesque front woman named September (portrayed by Emily Lazar) of the band/transmedia project September Mourning. The singer is covered in white like a heavy metal snow queen. Her character and story line (co-created by Lazar and comic book legend Marc Silvestri) require her to be covered in ghostly white from the top of her snaking hair extensions, to her Kabuki-style face paint and a superhero outfit made of a leather, metallic studs, buckles and straps.

The mansion belongs to nightclub mogul Art Davis and his wife, former rock singer and 1979 Penthouse Pet of the Year, Cheryl Rixon, who was actually on the cover of the issue of *Oui* that Blair got signed by Mötley Crüe back in '82.

The spirit of classic rock feels comfortably encapsulated in the lavish home. An African jungle theme with hand-carved statues of wild animals and massive palm trees collide with a mirrored ceiling above the plush couches and rows of thick biographies of icons like Jimi Hendrix, Billy Idol and Janis Joplin. A life-like oil painting of John Lennon watches over Blair's interview with September from the corner by the open double doors of the balcony.

Though much of the interview surrounds September's fictional character, at one point Blair asks her a question weighted in reality.

BLAIR SABBATH!

PROVIDED BY ERIC BLAIR

"How important is fame and could you live without it?" he asks.

"I think what's most important is that people get the message and people understand the art and respond to the art," September says. "If that makes me famous, great, if two people get it great. As long as somebody responds to it ... because I have to do this."

There's no question that two decades of producing his own show definitely makes Blair the living embodiment of the statement. But fame doesn't happen without the will to achieve something in spite of those who say you can't. In that respect, Blair's spirit has always had to

be louder than the naysayers every time he picks up his mic to do an interview. As long as he continues doing it, he'll continue to live life the way he always has: Forever Blairing Out.

"People have just told me over and over that, 'You're fantasizing, you're not a real interviewer, you're never gonna make it,'" he says. "When I'm super low, having that next interview booked, that's like the next bridge to my life. Without that, I might just stay down. But instead I'm like 'Oh, I have to rise up to get that next interview. Because life isn't gonna wait for me.'"

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JEFF FASANO

fri/07/01

[FILM]

Off the Wall *Dark Progressivism*

The world has seen plenty of examples of street art, from its train-tagging roots in New York to its wider acceptance into the art world; yet, rarely do we learn the backgrounds and stories of those who lived to scrawl messages on walls. Enter director Rodrigo Ribera d'Ebre, whose film *Dark Progressivism* fills in those forgotten details in modern-art history. D'Ebre focuses on legendary Los Angeles artists including Chaz Bojorquez, Cryptik, Big Sleeps and others, who turned a life of gang violence toward producing wonderful creative expressions of their grim lives through graffiti, tattoo, and a mural style known as dark progressivism. With filmmaker d'Ebre attending this screening at the Museum of Latin American Art, audiences can glean more about these stories.

Dark Progressivism at Museum of Latin American Art, 628 Alamitos Ave., Long Beach, (562) 216-4190; www.molaa.org. 7 p.m. \$10 with RSVP; members, free. —AIMEE MURILLO

[CONCERT]

Together Again Dave Alvin and Phil Alvin

Musicians and brothers in guitars Dave and Phil Alvin have come a long way individually since Dave left their band, the Blasters, in the late '80s; but as their recent reunion shows, they're not entirely done collaborating. The Downey-born Alvins continued to find the spark in their musical partnership with the album *Common Ground: Dave Alvin & Phil Alvin Play and Sing the Songs of Big Bill Broonzy*, followed by their latest, *Lost Time*, on which the duo rediscover the R&B and blues music they fell in love with in their youth. As part of their eponymous tour, they'll share their blues-inspired music, with Dave's backing band the Guilty Ones, tonight at the Coach House. Fans will probably cross their fingers for a few Blasters numbers mixed into the song list as well!

Dave Alvin and Phil Alvin with the Guilty Ones at the Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, (949) 496-8930; thecoachhouse.com. 8 p.m. \$20. —AIMEE MURILLO

sat/07/02

[PETS]

*SANDY PAWS! Corgi of July

Corgi Beach Day is a big deal for dog-lovers across the land because, as any dog fan will tell you, corgis are some of the friendliest, most magical creatures to ever grace us with their presence. Celebrate corgis at today's holiday-themed Corgi of July Beach Day, at which owners can enter their beloved pets in several contests, including a talent contest, "Pawtriotic Costume Contest" and a watermelon-eating contest. There's also a bubble pavilion where corgis can try to pop as many flavored bubbles (including bacon-flavored!) as they can, a corgi kissing booth and more. If this event can bring more than 1,000 corgis in for a photo, they'll shatter the world record for most corgis in attendance. But being in the presence of a few hundred to pet and admire will be fun, too!

Corgi of July at Rosie's Dog Beach, 5200 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach; www.socalcorgination.com. 10 a.m. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

[CONCERT]

Let It Ring FRDM Fest

Summer festival season has begun—so why not start it out right with a music fest aimed at benefitting a good cause? Today's FRDM Fest at the *Queen Mary* Waterfront Events Park will donate 100 percent of its ticket proceeds to Teen Cancer America, a charity originally founded by Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend of the Who. In exchange for your generosity, you'll be treated to music from SNDCLSH, with a special performance by Lupe Fiasco; rappers T-Pain and Kid Ink; and DJ sets by ARMNHMR, Bixel Boys, Coyote Kisses, Le Youth and other electronica producers. There will also be art installations, games, and food and beer stands, sure to stoke warm vibes within everyone in attendance.

FRDM Fest at *Queen Mary* Waterfront Events Park, 1126 Queens Hwy., Long Beach; www.frdmfest.com. Noon. \$50-\$100. 18+. —AIMEE MURILLO

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sun/07/03

[CONCERT]

TWIST YOUR FINGAZ Endless Summer

Armed with a vigorously devoted fan base, G-Eazy and Logic have long been favorites of the hip, backpack set, thanks to intricate rhymes and even more carefully constructed song structures, allowing them to become successful before achieving mainstream notice. Also featured on the bill will be Compton's YG, who is no slouch in his own right. As one of hip-hop's biggest tours this season, Endless Summer showcases the best of what the genre has to offer.

Endless Summer, featuring G-Eazy, Logic and YG, at Irvine Meadows Amphitheatre, 8808 Irvine Center Dr., Irvine, (949) 855-8095; www.irvineamp.com. 6:30 p.m. \$32-\$1296. —DANIEL KOHN

[HOLIDAY]

Smoke On the Water July 3rd Fireworks Cruise

This year, the 4th of July falls on the least patriotic day of the week, Monday, so it would be most American of you to revolt against your archaic calendar, flip your booze cruise schedule to Sunday night, and celebrate our nation's actual birthday hungover in bed. If you choose this path of life success, you can do so aboard

one of Harbor Breeze Cruises' yachts and witness a fireworks spectacular over the beautiful Long Beach Harbor. Tickets are only \$30, and American Flag shorts are encouraged. You'll have nothing to fear but fear itself . . . and maybe sharks.

July 3rd Fireworks Cruise at Harbor Breeze Cruises, 100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, (562) 432-4900; tickets.harbor-cruises.com. 7:30 p.m. \$30.

—AMANDA PARSONS

mon/07/04

[HOLIDAY]

Red, White and Booze 4th of July Celebration

This July 4, do things differently: Relax at the scenic beachside resort known as Newport Dunes. Frolic on the sand while the Tom Solis Band, Fleetwood Mac cover band Mirage and Journey tribute group DSB rock out for Lady Liberty. The Beer & Wine Garden Pass offers adults a chance to imbibe, while food trucks allow you to skip out on barbecue duty. Then sit back for the annual fireworks show. Spend the summer holiday right with your nearest and dearest.

4th of July Celebration at Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort, 1131 Back Bay Dr., Newport Beach, (949) 729-3863; www.newportdunes.com. Gates open, 8 a.m.; event starts, 3 p.m. \$50 per car. —AIMEE MURILLO

tue/07/05

[ART]

Modern Man 'Peter Krasnow: Maverick Modernist'

Sixteen years ago, the Laguna Art Museum acquired much of the work of LA-based Ukrainian-Jewish émigré Peter Krasnow (born Feivish Reisberg) as a gift from his foundation, then pledged to mount a definitive show of paintings and sculpture by this underappreciated West Coast Modernist. That big thank-you exhibition has arrived: "Maverick Modernist" showcases everything from the colorful, narrative and folklore-based early pieces to his later geometric tableaus, charting both a movement and an often-overlooked artist who now finds immortality in Laguna Beach.

"Peter Krasnow: Maverick Modernist" at Laguna Art Museum, 307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach, (949) 494-8971; lagunaartmuseum.org. 11 a.m. Through Sept. 25. \$5-\$7.

—ANDREW TONKOVICH



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wed/07/06

[CONCERT]

Westside Reconnection

Mack 10 and Suga Free

Has it really been 20 years since Mack 10 and WC told the rap world to "Bow Down" with Westside Connection? Damn, it has! The late '90s also had everybody saying, "Geah!" with MC Eight and staying ready (because if you stay ready, you ain't got to get ready!) with pimp-turned-rapper Suga Free. All four legendary West Coast rappers are reassembling in Santa Ana

for solo shows in what's sure to be an epic show. Get your "Backyard Boogie" on at the Observatory, even if you're a "Streih Up Menace." And don't forget to twist those fingers up in a W!

Mack 10, Suga Free and others at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com. 7 p.m. \$20. —GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN



[THEATER]

HAIL TO THE KING

All Shook Up

Loosely based on Shakespeare's 1602 play *Twelfth Night*, the 2004 jukebox musical *All Shook Up*, with book by Joe DiPietro, centers on two Midwest kids, Natalie and Chad, who discover the magic of romance and the power of rock & roll through the iconic music of Elvis Presley. Featuring legendary hits "Heartbreak Hotel," "Love Me Tender," "Don't Be Cruel," "Can't Help Falling in Love" and more, this popular production played on Broadway for almost 250 performances. It's the perfect summertime rock-fest, with plenty of heart-warming sentimentality, so slip on your blue suedes and swivel your hips on over.

All Shook Up at the Laguna Beach Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-ARTS; www.lagunaplayhouse.com. 7:30 p.m. Through Aug. 7. \$45-\$75. —SR DAVIES

thu/07/07

[ART]

DEAD MAN'S PARTY

Jazz, Martinis, and Mummies!

The "Mummies of the World" exhibit at the Bowers Museum is serious stuff for the sarcophagus set. It goes way beyond the usual Egyptian mummies, tracking mummification through time and space all the way up to American mummies and even shrunken heads. Of course, as any long-dead person might tell you, you gotta live while you can, and since nothing pairs with stark proof of human mortality like a strong cocktail, the Bowers is livening up the exhibit with a themed happy-hour menu, featuring the finest of aged cheeses (one hopes), custom cocktails, and jazz sounds provided by David Zasloff and the Dar Caña Trio. While this does seem like the exact kind of careless modern-day hedonism that would wake the dead to vengeful action (wasn't this the first 15 minutes of one of those *The Mummy* movies?), you shouldn't worry. That almost never really happens!

Jazz, Martinis, and Mummies! at the Bowers Museum, 2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana, (714) 567-3600; www.bowers.org. 5 p.m. \$20-\$45. 18+. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

[THEATER]

Back In Flight

Bye Bye Birdie

The Tony Award-winning, Broadway musical *Bye Bye Birdie* first won over audiences in 1960. The winsome comedy starts with rock & roll heartthrob Conrad Birdie, who, as a last publicity stunt before he leaves for the Army, will sing "One Last Kiss" on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, then kiss a lucky girl chosen at random from his fan club.

This seemingly harmless act has already disrupted the small-town lives of Kim MacAfee (the lucky girl in question); her jealous boyfriend, Hugo; and the citizens of her hometown, Sweet Apple, Ohio—not to mention Birdie's agent, Albert Peterson, and his girlfriend/secretary, Rosie Alvarez. Catch this cutesy slice of Americana to see how these hapless characters fare in this family-friendly production.

Bye Bye Birdie at the Gem Theatre, 12852 Main St., Garden Grove, (714) 741-9550, ext. 221; www.onemoreproductions.com. 8 p.m. Through July 10. \$23-\$26. —AIMEE MURILLO

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8/4
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8/21
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9/10
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CAVALIERE'S
RASCALS



9/17
DICK DALE



10/22
THE
PROCLAIMERS

9/16 RICHARD CHEESE
9/17 DICK DALE
9/18 NELSON
9/23 DELTA RAE
10/7 TREVOR HALL
10/8 SUPER DIAMOND (NEIL DIAMOND TRIBUTE)
10/13 ERIC HUTCHINSON
10/15 PETTY vs EAGLES
10/22 THE PROCLAIMERS
10/27 THE DIRTY KNOBS / MARC FORD
10/29 OINGO BOINGO DANCE PARTY
10/30 SAVOY BROWN
11/4 DON MCLEAN
11/11 AMERICA
11/12 AMERICA
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HOLD THE SRIRACHA

BRIAN FEINZIMER

Where the Sauce Is Boss

Quan Mii makes a great bottled sauce and even better bánh xèo
BY EDWIN GOEI

In a lot of ways, Quan Mii is indistinguishable from the hundreds of other eateries in Little Saigon. It's on Bolsa, tucked in a corner of one of those sprawling strip malls whose storefronts offer every conceivable service, from financial planning to hypnotherapy. If you didn't know it's as refreshing as it is anywhere you've had it in Little Saigon. But then you observe the customers at the next table swirling goblets of wine. That's when you start to notice other things about Quan Mii.

You stir your ice-laden glass of cam vat (Vietnamese-style, fresh-squeezed orange juice) to dissolve the sugar, and then take a drag, discovering it's as refreshing as it is anywhere you've had it in Little Saigon. But then you observe the customers at the next table swirling goblets of wine. That's when you start to notice other things about Quan Mii.

The place is brightly lit and spotless, with the gleaming veneer of a restaurant that just opened. There's also a higher level of attentiveness here, something historically not associated with Little Saigon. The waiters, who come around to refill your water glass at regular intervals, also keep asking, "Is everything okay?" The most curious difference of all is the absence of Huy Fong Foods' Sriracha. Instead, the servers bring out two bottles of a brand called Mii Sauce. As you read the labels, you note the restaurant and the bottles are inextricably linked, if not owned by the same person.

Which came first? The restaurant or the sauces? There are opposing camps

on this. But if the restaurant was built as a proof of concept for these sauces, it's working. The chefs dribble the original flavor over the melt-in-your-mouth, crispy salmon-belly appetizer. They zigzag it over the fried tofu blocks just underneath the topping of shaved bonito and scallions. They even douse an appetizer of lacy-crisp, fried, fish cake and quail eggs with it, something you've never seen anywhere in Little Saigon even in its unsauced form. And if the chefs' dose isn't enough (and it really isn't), squirt some more from the bottle. The closest thing it resembles is an umami-imbued plum sauce. The spicy one from the red bottle, on the other hand, is like a mixture of hoisin and Sriracha. "Can't Eat Without It!" is Mii Sauce's motto, and a label taped to the bottles tells you which local grocery stores carry it.

Bánh xèo's trademark sauce is the sweet-and-sour nuoc cham, but throw on some Mii as well. The crepe is ethereally light, crispy and nearly greaseless. The fillings include not only the usual bean sprouts, shrimp and pork, but also jicama, which adds to the texture. Every order of bánh xèo comes with the obligatory Amazon of herbs, a stack of dried rice-paper discs and something filled with hot water in which to moisten them one-by-one. Lay down a wetted rice paper on your plate, then add a few herbs, cucumber, lettuce and a torn swatch of the crepe, followed by fillings. Then roll. It takes a few tries, but refine your technique by watching how the other patrons do it. By the third one, you're a master.

The most expensive and elaborate dish is a ginger-stuffed striped bass steamed and served whole with a stir-fry of pork, vermicelli noodles, dried lily flowers, and shiitake and wood ear mushrooms. And though you're given the same herbs-and-rice-paper setup to roll and eat with the fish, it's more tedious with this dish. Since you have to navigate your way around fish bones that don't always make themselves known until they're already in your mouth, it's as though you're performing delicate surgery. The easiest dish to consume is the restaurant's other specialty: the Central Vietnamese noodle soup called mi quang, which has wide yellow noodles halfway submerged in an intense broth while also being covered in enough herbs and lettuce to constitute a salad.

Quan Mii offers other Central Vietnamese specialties including banh uot (steamed rice noodle sheets covered with a flurry of dried shrimp) and banh beo (steamed rice cakes in tiny saucers), as well as a do-it-yourself shabu-shabu-style hot pot with either rib-eye or salmon. Swirl the raw meat in a gurgling broth heated by Sterno; per your waiter's suggestion, dip it in more Mii Sauce as soon as it's done. Then imagine what kind of restaurant Huy Fong Foods would come up with if they followed Quan Mii's business model.

QUAN MII

9541 Bolsa Ave., Westminster, (714) 418-9644. Open daily, 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Dinner for two, \$20-\$40, food only. Beer and wine.

HOLE IN THE WALL
» GUSTAVO ARELLANO

The Nicest Cream

ANDREW'S ICE CREAM

1549 E. Katella Ave., Orange, (714) 829-9350; www.andrewsicecream.com.

In this political era of demonizing, Andrew's Ice Cream shocked the nation in May when it did something downright revolutionary: It was *nice*.

The Orange ice-cream parlor has built a cult following over the past couple of years for its creamy, milky product, which spans the flavor rainbow from the standard (luscious butter pecan) to the ethnic (ube ice cream, made from a Filipino purple yam, is the best flavor you've never tasted) to original creations (the Reindeer Tracks is like a peppermint stampede in your mouth) to even keeping a suggestion box that allows customers to offer their own concoctions. But it made national news after an unfortunate incident in which a racist customer started berating two young ladies because they dared to be Muslim in public, yelling, "I want them out of my country" to no one in particular. In video footage of the incident, the hijab-bedecked gals kept their cool and even threw in some sass: "Too bad; we're here. Sucks for you," one cracked to her harasser. But the Andrew's Ice Cream owner on the floor was even more radical. She tossed out the Islamophobic loser with these stinging words: "If you can't be nice, we don't want you here."

BOOM. That's the mantra at Andrew's: an oasis of positivity. Even before the incident, photos and inspirational quotes ranging from MLK to Muhammad Ali to the legendary shot of a sailor embracing a nurse in Times Square decorated the walls. A small library of classic children's books (Dr. Seuss, the Berenstain Bears, Clifford the Big Red Dog) stands near the entrance, below a classroom project created by Andrew himself. It's a Rockwell idyll come to life, and not just because of the book featuring his artwork in the unisex restroom.

There's little else at Andrew's—I think the family who owns it makes brownies, too, but I never notice while asking for more and more samples from the patient workers. Besides, I'm too impressed by the steady stream of Orange County who come in: old, young, working-class, Lexus drivers, all ethnicities imaginable—all united under ice cream, the way our Founding Fathers intended.

GARELLANO@OCWEEKLY.COM

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SHOULDN'T WORK,
BUT DOES

JOSH CHESLER

Breakfast Burrito + Doughnuts = YUM

Doughrito at Surfin' Donuts

If you've been keeping up with your trendy Instagram accounts, you've already heard the rumbles coming from South County. Among the numerous doughnut shops that line OC streets, Surfin' Donuts in Mission Viejo has created an item to break away from the pack, one that answers the age-old stoner question "What if we put a doughnut inside a breakfast burrito?"

The doughrito is just that, and it works as well as your high friends would have you believe. Is the breakfast burrito the best you'll find in OC? Probably not. It's pretty standard, with eggs, cheese and your choice of bacon, sausage, ham or

EAT THIS NOW

» JOSH CHESLER

steak. But the sweet addition of a few doughnut options makes for a sweet-and-savory combination that works as well in the morning as it does when it's reheated at 2 a.m. The breakfast sandwich on a doughnut was a nice invention, but the doughrito is taking it to a whole new level.

SURFIN' DONUTS

24451 Alicia Pkwy., Mission Viejo, (949) 220-0131; missionviejocadonuts.com.



DRINK OF THE WEEK

» ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

Count the Ways at Hatch

Negroni Week ended already, but there's still time to experiment with and imbibe what Orange County has to offer. For an easygoing menu with crafted libations, head

into Hatch's midcentury-modern tiki room within Union Market Tustin. If Trevor is behind the bar, request the current iteration of his ode to Negroni known as Count the Ways.

THE DRINK

Traditionally a gin/Vermouth/Campari blend, this goes against type with a rum base. Specifically, a Papa's Pilar brand in quantities so limited Hatch purchased an entire barrel. One part Carpano Antica Vermouth enters the equation, but it's the infused, sweet Campari you need to watch out for.

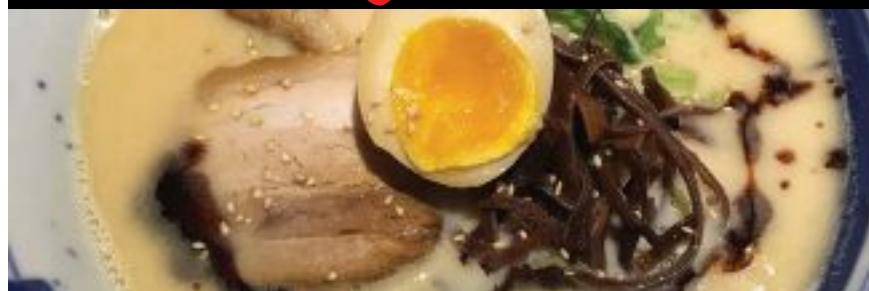
Packed with cloves, cinnamon, star anise, vanilla, orange zest and juniper berries (a subtle nod to gin!), it packs in more complexity to an already potent bottle. To finish, Elemakule Tiki Bitters imparts a hint of grapefruit and some house simple syrup. Savor it until it's gone, then repeat.

HATCH

2493 Park Ave., Tustin, (657) 208-2088; www.eathatch.com.

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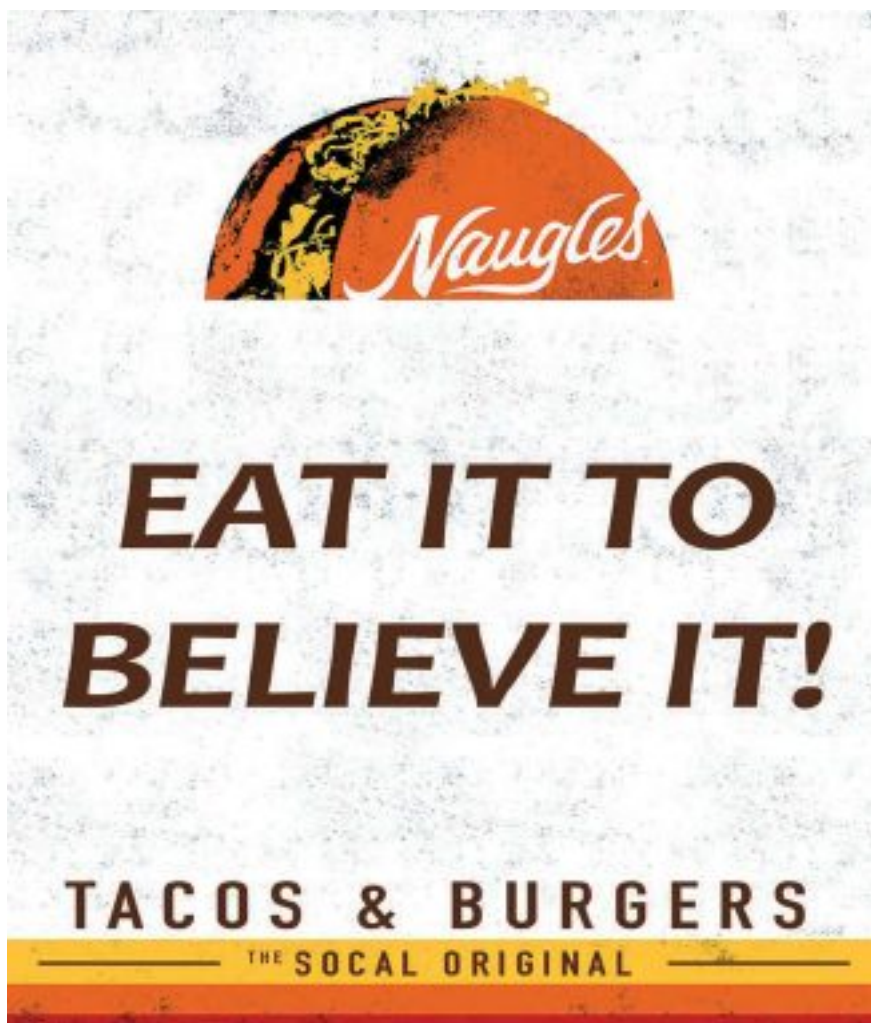
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MIRACLE OF THE SLICES



SARAH BENNETT

Transforming Lives Through Pizza

5000 Pies is not only delicious, but also good for the soul

If you ever need someone to support a good cause, all you need to do is provide the pizza. And while that's maybe not the exact theory behind the Fountain of Life Covenant Church's West Long Beach takeout food counter 5000 Pies, the utterly addictive, Chicago-inspired deep-dish pizzas it serves do help to transform the lives of local young adults, one culinary job at a time.

This is one of the region's few food-based social enterprises, a burgeoning type of for-profit business created exclusively to tackle a social problem. In this case, 5000 Pies is owned by the decade-old church, which meets at Stephens Middle School and opened the kitchen in 2014 as part of a mission to create positive change in its community.

With youth-unemployment rates higher in Long Beach than the state or national average and few resources for job training, Fountain of Life sought to help its neighbors and congregation members improve their own lives (never mind that the food scene in West Long Beach could also use a contemporary concept or two). Inspired by the story in the Bible in which Jesus fed 5,000 people with just a few loaves of bread and fish, the answer was clear: affordable pies. In its midst was a sweet pie expert, who turned her award-winning tinned creations—including maple dark chocolate pecan, double apple, toasted coconut with banana cream, and more—into whole pies available for pre-order (\$18-\$25) and hand pies to grab and go (two for \$5).

Also in its arsenal is executive chef and trainer Michael Martinez, who attended Le Cordon Bleu after a rough-and-tumble childhood in San Tana and worked in res-

Long Beach Lunch
» SARAH BENNETT

taurant catering for decades. His "Long Beach-style" deep-dish pizzas (around \$20 each) are the core of 5000 Pies' business, each inches-high, sweet, yellow crust loaded with toppings, cheese and the requisite chunky tomato sauce requiring a 45-to-60-minute wait. Even when not ordered "loaded style" (all the meat and all the veggies), each slice is akin to a piece of lasagna, a hearty knife-and-fork meal in itself.

There are no tables inside—just a few benches on which you can sit as you wait for the staff (currently a mix of trainees and program graduates) to prepare your order. Grab a few 50-cent cookies or whatever seasonal dessert treats are in the case while you hang out, or head to the snack shop next door for a wide selection of drinks (and a few chairs). Despite its location in the hard-to-access sliver between the 710 freeway and the Port of LA, its unconventional advance ordering and its takeout-only setup, at the end of last month, the social enterprise hit a significant milestone: It sold its 5,000th pie. That translates to numerous job opportunities, dozens of people given culinary-workforce training, and multiple lives transformed. Finally, there's pizza we can feel good about eating.

5000 PIES

2064 Santa Fe Ave., Long Beach, (562) 901-0615; www.5000pies.com.

SOMEONE CALL PETA



IFC FILMS/AMAZON STUDIOS

This Wiener Life

Todd Solondz gives Dawn Wiener a new life in *Wiener-Dog*
BY AIMEE MURILLO

Todd Solondz won the praise of critics—and earned a lasting cult following—with his breakthrough 1995 indie debut, *Welcome to the Dollhouse*. Little did the writer/director know that the film's tragicomic heroine—the hilariously unlikeable, misfit teenager Dawn Wiener (played by Heather Matarazzo)—would be a character he'd follow in his later work. Dawn re-emerges in Solondz's *Palindromes*, only the film opens at her funeral; Dawn had continued on her miserable personal trajectory before committing suicide.

If any of that strikes you as outrageously depressing, well, you're missing the joy of Solondz's wonderfully dark humor. At a recent Cinefamily screening of his latest film, *Wiener-Dog*, he gave a brief introduction, saying, "I always describe my movies as sad comedies. This film is more like a comedy in despair."

And indeed, it is. *Wiener-Dog* follows four eccentric characters who are connected through their ownership of the same adorable chocolate dachshund. It's also the third in the Wiener Trilogy, as Dawn Wiener is resurrected in the second vignette.

Each of the dog's keepers is stranger (and yes, sadder) than the last: A young cancer survivor (Keaton Nigel Cooke),

Remi, gets the dog first, aptly naming her Wiener Dog, and asks his mother (Julie Delpy) questions about life and death, to which she responds with horrible, deadpan ineptitude. Remi is blissfully happy with Wiener Dog, but then he ignorantly feeds the dog granola, leading the poor pup to leak diarrhea all over the house and sidewalk, shown in a lengthy camera pan set to "Clair de Lune."

From there, she's saved from being euthanized by Dawn Wiener (now played by Greta Gerwig), who's, more hopefully, a veterinary assistant in this life. Dawn encounters her *Dollhouse* bully/crush Brandon McCarthy (Kieran Culin) at a convenience store, who greets her with the same nickname from their adolescence: "Hey, Wiener Dog!" The two decide to pack up and trek across the country, stopping at one strange house after another, and picking up the saddest mariachi band in the world, before reaching Brandon's brother and sister-in-law—who both have Down syndrome—so Brandon can painfully explain to his brother that their father died. Dawn and Brandon leave the dog with the couple and head out on their own uncertain futures.

Cut to a short, bizarre intermission segment of the dog walking through different

locations, after which the film gets significantly darker and our traveling dachshund heroine becomes less and less part of the narrative. Wiener Dog's next owner is David Schmerz (Danny DeVito), an aging adjunct professor and screenwriter struggling to stay relevant. Schmerz is deemed too "negative" and out of touch by his millennial, liberal-minded students, which puts him on a slowly descending spiral and leads to him sending his pooch on a suicide mission to blow up the school.

In the final part of the film, Wiener Dog is owned by a rich, curmudgeonly invalid (Ellen Burstyn) who names the dog Cancer. Her mooching granddaughter (Zosia Mamet) comes to borrow money for her philandering boyfriend's art project, and she's also later visited by the ghost of her childhood self, as well as those of the lives she could have lived, from the profound ("Here's you if you forgave your daughter") to the inane ("Here's you if you tipped better").

Solondz takes his inspiration for *Wiener-Dog*, with its heavy theme of life and death, from the 1966 Robert Bresson film, *Au Hasard Balthazar*, which follows the short life and death of a donkey in the hands of various owners. Both films use the goodness and purity of docile, domesticated creatures to magnify their masters'

own flawed, self-absorbed lives, as well as their existential angst. As in most of Solondz's films, these characters are marginalized—or cruelly rebuffed—by society in some way, left to wonder about their place in this big ol' world.

But Solondz doesn't fixate on their suffering—which is their constant state of being. Instead, we're witness to their awkward (and uproarious) attempts at normalcy through their interactions with those around them, who are just as contemptible and self-absorbed, forcing the viewer to ask, "What is normal?" *Wiener-Dog* oscillates between absurd, cartoonishly bad situations and tender, optimistic moments before it treads to its grim conclusion. Life may not always be a walk in the park, but there'll always be something to laugh about.

AMURILLO@OCWEEKLY.COM

WIENER-DOG

was written and directed by Todd Solondz; and stars Greta Gerwig, Julie Delpy, Danny DeVito, Ellen Burstyn, Kieran Culin, Zosia Mamet, Tracy Letts and Keaton Nigel Cooke.

Now screening at Regency South Coast Village, 1561 Sunflower Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 557-5701; www.regencymovies.com.

Check website for show times.

Heaven's Eunuch

Shakina Nayfack brings her one-woman show, and her fascinating take on life, to SanTana

BY JOEL BEERS

She is, by most standards, part of white Middle America's waking nightmare: A tattooed-up Marxist transsexual artist who writes that she has given her pussy to Jesus.

Yet, talk to Shakina Nayfack, a born-and-raised Orange Countian turned New York City-based theater performer, and it's hard to shake the impression that hers is actually a quintessentially American story. After all, what's more American than finding, and fighting for, your place in a country constantly slapping itself on its red-white-and-blue-hued back for being all about opportunity and self-determination?

Nayfack brings her one-woman show *Manifest Pussy* to the Yost Theater Friday, July 1, as part of WTF Fridays. A synthesis of two earlier solo shows, the music-infused piece both documents and celebrates her journey, reminding anyone struggling with their place in the world to not give up. She describes it as both angry and loving, fun and feisty, and it's all about giving hope to the underdog, something that has long been etched into Nayfack's familial DNA.

"Labor organizing has been part of my family for generations," says Nayfack, who was born Jewish but who attended Catholic school in Rancho Santa Margarita. "My great-grandmother was a labor organizer, my grandfather was a fierce defender of the Chicano Latino community and my father was also involved."

Her grandfather's favorite quote is from John Dewey, which is inscribed beneath a poster of Christ preaching the Golden Rule in a frame in Nayfack's home: "Our government here in America is not perfect, and it never will be perfect as long as it is made up of human beings. But it is so far the best government of the people, for the people, and by the people ... until we have the time and wisdom and the tolerance and the power to make it over—into something better."

That's why amid all this hubbub of identity politics and backlash against it, Nayfack, who would seem firmly positioned on the frontlines of that battle, yearns for a time when America can get over it and put its straight/queer/whatever shoulder to the wheel.

"To me, identity politics is such a 20th century phenomenon and I hope we're at the tail end of that wave because what I think we need to be looking at fundamentally is economic inequality and how that plays into education, immigration, labor, gender, politics, and everything else," she said. "But, I'm a Marxist at heart."

Before coming out as transgendered and her gender confirmation surgery, Nayfack, who was born Jared Nayfack, was



"NO FUCKS GIVEN," HER T-SHIRT SAYS!

MICHAEL KUSHNER

an activist. At Santa Margarita Catholic High School, Nayfack was bullied by classmates for wearing nail polish, makeup and spiked heels to class. When Nayfack complained, school officials told him and his mother he should enroll in another school. Nayfack told the *Weekly* in 2013. Instead, he attempted to form an ultimately unsuccessful gay-straight alliance on campus in 1999, when he was a senior.

Nayfack moved to New York in 2011 with the goal of directing theater, but wound up writing two solo pieces, which serve as the groundwork for *Manifest Pussy*. Though she knows people in Orange County and Los Angeles, and actually helped one of the show's sponsors, DeColores Queer OC (other sponsors include the LGBT Center OC and the Breath of Fire Latina Theater Ensemble) get off the ground, this will be the first time that she will perform in the region as a transgender woman.

She says that the increase of diversity in Orange County, gender, sexuality and ethnic, is welcome, particularly since "even the idea of transpride was unfathomable when I was living there as a young person." That may be true, but there aren't many transpeople in Orange County—hell the world—whose expression of that experience matches that of Nayfack, who has

written matter-of-factly about both being gangbanged by Thai strippers and how she is a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven.

"I think what I'm trying to do in a way is to represent the true teachings of Jesus," she said. "So maybe all these folks in Middle America who may have misconstrued [His] message can hopefully find a correction. That's not my only objective, but I think that is so wonderfully subversive about it. There are so many queer people who have felt divorced from a relationship with the divine, whatever their faith is, because so many of the great religious teachings have been polluted with homophobia. But transgendered people have been around for thousands of years in nearly every society and it's only in our contemporary western culture that we haven't made room [for them]. So, I would ask people who just want to sling mud, 'how many times have you been made to feel that you're not a real man or a real woman?' So, really, I see nothing radical about having a tattooed-up transwoman talking about Jesus and her new vagina in the same breath."

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TRENDZILLA

» AIMEE MURILLO

TV Repair Artist

Whether you know the name Sean Robertson or not, chances are you've seen his art installations: Old, recycled television sets ranging in size and stacked on top of each other like wrapped gift boxes underneath a Christmas tree, sometimes among a couple of rescued suitcases and mannequins sticking out. These visually stunning sets have made the SanTana-based Robertson a sought-after artist for many local art shows, bar shows and festivals that want a visual art component for their event.

But before he began working in art, Robertson was a musician for years. It wasn't until he and a friend collaborated on a conceptual music project called Datadrone that he developed an interest in tinkering with technology. Datadrone performed shows with television sets and projections of self-produced videos that were synced with the narrative-driven music. After that project fizzled out, Robertson had leftover television sets that he decided to use for installations, as well as an interest in producing warped, experimental videos which would make the Residents jealous. The 47-year-old continues to shoot and edit strange, looped videos and plays them during his installations, adding to his surreal vision.

Robertson doesn't claim to be an electrician; he just enjoys the adrenaline of having to fix logistical problems on the spot "because every time I have problems I gotta troubleshoot and figure it out, and I learn something new out of it. ... I'm doing these things usually in a [dark] bar setting with drunk people walking around."

A heavy multitasker, Robertson is always working on multiple projects at once, stop-motion animation projects to mixed media paintings, which can all be found on his Instagram @seanrobertson. In the meantime, he's perfectly at ease with people recognizing him from his eye-catching set-ups. "I see a lot of strangers taking pictures of my installs, and I've often thought, 'Damn, I must be one of the most photographed installation [local artists] around,'" he says. "And it's true, because they're so interesting-looking."



AIMEE MURILLO

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When More Becomes Less

The multi-genre, multi-day festival needs to stop
BY JOSH CHESLER

Last month, Coachella pre-sale tickets sold out in less than four hours. Although the festival won't happen for more than 10 months and none of the bands playing have even been announced yet, enough people already know where they want to be next April to allow Coachella to hold an "advance sale" year after year.

Around the same time, on the other side of the country, the rain-shortened Governors Ball Music Festival took over New York City for a couple of days (Sunday was canceled due to the threat of thunderstorms and the fact that 72 people got struck by lightning at a music festival in Germany shortly before). Roughly 50,000 people each day crammed into a four-stage festival to see acts like the Strokes, the Killers, Beck, Miguel, and HAIM (Death Cab for Cutie and Kanye West were Sunday's canceled headliners), and few left disappointed by what they saw—aside from the lack of DCFC and Kanye.

But something seemed off.

I'm not a festival expert by any means. I haven't been to a decade's worth of Coachella. I rarely travel cross-country for a week-end of music, and until a handful of years ago, the bulk of my festival experience was comprised of the Warped Tours of the 2000s.

That said, the rise of Snapchat, Instagram and every other FOMO-inducing form of social media has shaped and changed festival crowds over the last few years. More people are worried about taking the perfect selfie than seeing their "favorite" bands, and you may as well have not even gone if you're not going to post everything you saw/did/ate/drank online while you're doing it.

Governors Ball (among other recent festivals I've been to) was filled with people doing their best to imitate what they think going to a festival should be. New York City is known for being one of the hippest/coolest places in the world, and yet 99 percent of the crowd at one of its biggest music festivals was comprised of the most boring young adults attempting to re-enact what they've seen of Coachella and other festivals through the filters of Instagram. Have you ever seen a rain-drenched pissed-off New Yorker wearing a flowing dress and flower crown? It's not a good look.

It's not just Governors Ball, it's many of the multi-day multi-genre music festivals. I'll never forget the Snapchating girls next to me during Against Me!'s set at Governors Ball ("I don't know anything by them, but they have the trans singer and she's hilarious on Twitter!") or the bros who kept wondering when J. Cole would play "Bitch, Don't Kill My Vibe" at last year's Summer Ends Music Festival in Arizona.

Festival culture has never been bigger,

JUST BE YOUR SELFIE



ROCKOGRAPHY

but it's also never been less about the music. As long as there are giant money-grabbing music festivals going on, there'll be people who go just to say they did (or just for the Facebook photo album). Unfortunately, the mainstream popularity of music festivals has created a world where spending hundreds of dollars to see a few bands you enjoy and a handful of others that you've heard of is totally reasonable as long as it gets you followers and likes. But if festivals keep selling out for \$400 per weekend, how much longer before it becomes \$500 or \$800? Ask anyone with a Disneyland pass, annual rate hikes are a bitch.

Not all festivals are bad though. Coachella will still be Coachella for as long as people are willing to drive to Coachella. It's the gold standard of festivals, and even with some publications pulling their coverage because of how far it's drifted away from the "music" half of "music festival," Coachella isn't stopping anytime soon. For that matter, Coachella could probably continue with no live music at all and plenty of people would still go. Coachella is the coolest kid in town, and it knows it. Other festivals like Outside Lands and Bonnaroo are allegedly more music-based, although I haven't been, so maybe they've changed.

For that matter, single-genre festivals are often fantastic. Last year's It's Not Dead Festival brought out punks of all ages from all over the world (as did Taste of Chaos, but more for the 2000s emo/pop punk scene), while Ice-T's Art of Rap Festival is an awesome day full of multi-generational hip-hop. Even radio station-hosted festivals like the KROQ

Weenie Roast bring in a more interested crowd. Rather than trying to draw the most people, focusing on one genre allows the festival to fill with audience members who are actual fans of the music and will (hopefully) spend more time watching the show than staring at their phones.

Dating back half of a century to the days of the Monterey Pop Festival and the beginning of the Reading Festival, music festivals have always been about curating a musical experience that will likely never be replicated. They're about combining handfuls of the biggest headlining acts all onto one bill for a day or a weekend that the attendees will never forget—save for drug-induced memory loss. Collecting the biggest names in punk rock (Riot Fest), EDM (Electric Daisy Carnival) or hip-hop (Summer Jam) does exactly that, with the bulk of the crowd excited for and knowledgeable about many of the performers. But throwing together 72 hours of bands that span the radio dial with a hit or two each isn't about creating the best experience possible for fans, it's about collecting that wristband money from as many casual listeners as possible.

While it's true that you'd probably never see Kanye West, Red Hot Chili Peppers and LCD Soundsystem all play at the same show otherwise, how many people are really avid fans and pining to see all three? How many Guns N' Roses fans were dying to see LCD Soundsystem or Calvin Harris at Coachella? For that matter, how many diehard Guns N' Roses fans even knew who Calvin Harris was?

And that's not even considering how

brutal it can be to see an artist you really like at a festival. Rather than paying \$30 to see them in a smaller theater or \$100 for the headliners' arena shows, you end up dropping hundreds to catch a glimpse of one of your favorite bands from a football field or two away with thousands of other people between you and them. While most acts bring out the hits for massive festivals, it's almost never the same level of intensity and passion you'd get in a true headlining show. For pop stars and legendary reunion acts, festivals serve as a means of spreading their music to as many casual fans as possible, but did anyone actually prefer seeing bands like Rancid, Interpol, Bad Religion, or Brand New perform at recent Coachella weekends rather than in smaller venues around SoCal on the weeks in between?

Eventually, it'll reach a point where the festival bubble bursts and it all collapses in on itself. People will stop paying the ludicrous prices, artists will stop bouncing from one festival to the next for entire summers, and promoters will stop making boatloads of money for one weekend in otherwise-obscure venues. There won't be mandatory selfies going on at every main stage in the world, and companies won't be cashing in on \$300 festival outfits or ridiculous Coachella-themed furniture—no, really, that's a thing. Festivals will go back to appealing to people who actually want to spend entire days engulfed in their favorite music, rather than serving as an overpriced live Spotify playlist. As far as I'm concerned, we can't get there fast enough.

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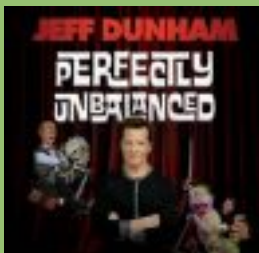
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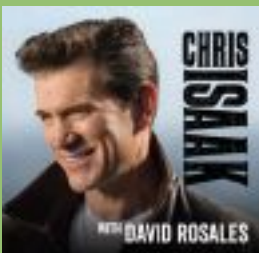
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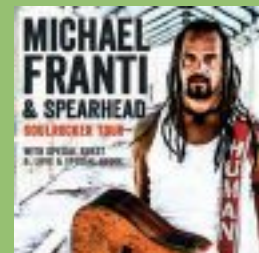
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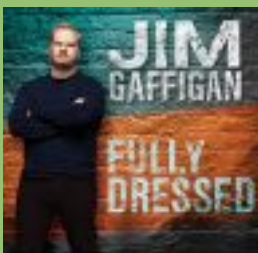
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CHRIS CARTER (R)
WITH PAUL

CHRIS CARTER

Hey Chris

Breakfast With the Beatles host is still hungry for the Fab Four

BY NATE JACKSON

Classic rock maintains a very simple dividing line for those who wish to rate the genre's greatest heroes. It goes something like this: There's the Beatles, and then there's everybody else. No time is that more clear than on Sundays at 9 a.m., when fans of the Fab Four tune in to KLOS-FM 95.5 for their version of church, otherwise known as *Breakfast With the Beatles*, hosted by Chris Carter. After 33 years, its legacy is older than the Beatles were when they called it quits in 1970. For the past 15 of those years, Carter's stamina for endlessly playing their entire catalog is astounding. Plus, he's interviewed Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, Pete Best, Billy Preston, and many other rock stars and important people in the annals of Beatles history. We talked to Carter about what it's like to host the longest-running Beatles radio show.

OC WEEKLY: What are some aspects of the Beatles' music that keep you excited about doing the *Breakfast With the Beatles* show?

CHRIS CARTER: Every week is different. You would think after so many years, one might get tired of the Beatles, but it never happens. That's one magical thing about the Beatles that makes them unique to almost all other recording artists. The longevity exists because every time you hear the music, you get something new out of it. If you go see Paul McCartney play any night, you'll see little kids in the crowd singing along, a 67-year-old hippie with a tie-dye shirt, people in their 30s and 40s—it's a span of generations you don't get anywhere else. If you go to a Stones concert, for instance, you're not gonna see little kids singing along to "Sister Morphine."

What's your first memory of listening to

them, and was their music something that instantly grabbed you?

I have a bunch of little firsts when it comes to the Beatles. I remember hearing my first Beatles song in 1964; I was 5. My first Beatles album was *Rubber Soul* when I was 7 or 8. I remember my mom would let me walk by myself to the movie theater 2 miles from my house to see *Let It Be* when I was 11. I could never picture myself letting my daughter walk 2 miles to go see a rock & roll movie now. But, of course, it was a different time back then. What are your thoughts on Paul and these various classic-rock gods going out to Indio for *Desert Trip*?

It's beyond a trip. Not only is it a mind-blower of a bill, but also the average age of everybody is, like, 72—it really is hard to believe. I also do a show for XM radio called *Chris Carter's British Invasion*, and I'm gonna be out there for that. So maybe I'll get to interview some of these guys; I know they'll probably be going to bed pretty early. But I hope each act does something special for it, as opposed to just doing a regular setlist. Like, if the Stones come out and do "Let It Bleed," or Paul McCartney comes out to do songs he's never done before.... There's a rumor that Roger Waters is gonna do one song from every Pink Floyd album. I'd love for Dylan to come out and do "Blonde on Blonde" and "[Autumn] Leaves."

What is the vibe you get from fans when you go to these live-broadcast events, considering *Breakfast With the Beatles* has been around for as long as it has?

It sounds corny or cliché that a radio station could be part of people's lives, but it really has become that. If something is always there, you can rely on it and really get used to it. But it's the music of the Beatles that carries the weight, so to speak—not to use an overused Beatles pun there. But it's a beautiful thing. It's been fun to have the Beatles involved with the show over the years.

N.JACKSON@OCWEEKLY.COM

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KIM CONLAN

ET, No Phone

Matt McCluer isn't competing for that headlining spot, major record deal or world tour. He is that rare breed of musician whose need to create music is his only driving force; there's no doubt that if the world fell apart, he would be hearing a melody in his head and finding a way to make it physical. McCluer doesn't drive, doesn't own a cell phone and hasn't updated his computer in almost a decade. He basically has everything he needs within close proximity of his Westside Costa Mesa home; he uses his cruiser bicycle to get where he needs to go. "My favorite part of existing is when I'm not done with a song yet," McCluer says. "I'm, like, half way through, and it's coming together, and I'm the only person in the world who knows about this thing that's happening."

Although born and raised in Newport Beach and Costa Mesa, McCluer didn't really get into the surf/skate/beach lifestyle. Except for an occasional stint on tour with Matt Adams of the Blank Tapes, McCluer has remained in Orange County. Even when his peers left for Portland, San Francisco, New York, Texas or across the Atlantic, "I basically just still had a drummer here, Joel [Williams], and even Joel moved away, but I would still have a band," he says. "I pretty much just drink coffee and sit on a bench, and I've noticed it's not a huge deal to me where that bench is."

McCluer has been satisfied staying local, as his environment influences his writing. "Most of my songs I write while I'm riding my bike," he says. "They pop into my head—it starts like that, and then I'll add everything else later, as opposed to creating stuff on an instrument." With the help of longtime band mates Williams and Bobby Perez, McCluer crafts music that is emotionally resonant without being overwrought.

Unfortunately, back in 2008, McCluer's

LOCALS ONLY

» KIM CONLAN

means of recording broke. Plus, McCluer says, "because I've been happy, I didn't write any songs. 'Cause if you don't have something to complain about, then you're not going to write the complaining song or the 'chill out, stop complaining' song."

During a six-year span, he only released an older album from his earlier project. "My 8-track machine broke, and I didn't do anything since then, but other stuff, like *The Sweet Sweet Things*, came out," he says. "That had already been recorded, so we dug it up and finished this album that had already been done."

Recently, however, McCluer, Williams and Perez have returned to writing and are recording an upcoming album. McCluer describes their process as "DIY, straight-up in the living room, right here. We've got some science-fiction stuff going on. . . . It's pretty goofy lyric content. They're more dynamics, but you can tell it's the same thing. We're trying to be more minimal—and also cleaning the guitars up a little bit."

When asked if he ever thinks about getting an updated cell or computer setup, he responds, "I'm not against technology, but I am aware that it's optional. The cell phone thing, in general, to me, just sounds so repulsive. In our society, there are a lot of people who don't understand that that's an option. So it's an ongoing battle—but . . . it's a battle for, like, joy."

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Douche Moves

Is it a super-douchey move to pretend to be a lesbian to avoid unwanted male attention? I'm a straight single woman in my mid-thirties and a very plausible lesbian in terms of sartorial stereotypes. Occasionally, a guy will hit on me in an awkward or creepy way, and I'll trot out a line about "not being into men." Most recently, I used this pose when a courier broke down in my driveway, and I invited him in for a glass of water while he waited for the tow truck. It was really uncomfortable and a little threatening when—after establishing that I lived alone—he asked me out. I guess I use this as an excuse so as to not hurt their feelings, but also to shut the conversation down as quickly as possible if I'm feeling vulnerable.

Is this a harmless white lie, or a major cop-out that would offend actual lesbians? Can you suggest some better strategies for when you're feeling cornered by a dude you're not interested in?

Lady's Entirely Zany Identity Enquiry

"I'm not offended by this," said someone I thought was an actual lesbian.

I shared your question with this person—a woman I thought was an actual lesbian—because I wasn't offended by it either, but I wanted to check with an actual lesbian just to be safe. Turns out my friend doesn't identify as a lesbian, but as a woman-who-loves-women-but-does-not-identify-as-a-lesbian—because-she-sometimes-finds-the-odd-dude-hot. So for the record: my friend is speaking for the WWL-WBDNIAALBSSFTODH community here—which often intersects/sexes with the lesbian community—and not the lesbian community.

"But even though I'm not offended by it, I have to say I've found the 'I'm into women' line to be totally ineffective," said my not-a-lesbian friend. "The creeps I've used it on get even more riled up after hearing that line. Sometimes, I check out and start ignoring these creeps as if they're wallpaper, but that can rile them up, too. Same with a polite 'I'm not interested.' The only success I've had with warding off creeps is by actually yelling at them, asking them if they'd like to be treated the way they're treating me, and if their mothers, sisters, etc., would appreciate that treatment."

My not-a-lesbian friend—who, as it turns out, identifies more strongly with the term "bisexual" than she does WWLWBDNIAALBSSFTODH—has also had some luck with the lose-your-shit strategy (e.g., screaming, yelling and waving your arms around like a crazy person).

"You kind of have to treat these people like bears at a campsite," said my not-a-lesbian friend. "You have to make yourself big and loud and scary so they don't get closer. Because they *will* get closer."

I have a difficult question. A dear young friend has recently started being a stripper for work. I won't lie: it tears me up. All I feel is sadness and worry—such a nice soul for what I feel is a not-so-nice environment. I really hope I'm wrong. Is there any way in which this can be okay?

My thoughts are that no matter how strong a woman is, no one can forget what they see or have to deal with. I worry for the sake of a nice person getting her ass handed to her too often and potentially breaking beyond repair. My gut emotion is that it doesn't matter how well you handle these situations—what matters is the fact that you see too much ugliness, too often, and get to a point at which you forget there are actually nice humans out there.

I guess my question is: How well can anyone handle this?

My Endangered Lady

I suspect she's handling it better than you are, MEL. And I would recommend minding your own business, backing the fuck off and Googling "white knight syndrome." But if your conscience requires you to say

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something, say something that opens up a conversation, rather than something so larded with shame, fear and judgment that it shuts the conversation down. Instead of saying something like "Oh, my God! What were you thinking?!" You'll be shredded emotionally and sexually! You could break beyond repair," try something like "Stripping isn't something I would feel comfortable doing myself. But I'm your friend, and if you need to talk with someone about your new job—if you need to decompress or vent—I'm here for you."

I've been lying to myself. I told myself that stability and friendship were more important to me than sex. I've been with my husband for 12 years, and we've been married for five of those. We were best friends, and I was already in love before we started dating and before we ever had sex. I should have known in the beginning that we weren't sexually compatible, but I chose to ignore it (or I chose stability and friendship). I chose my best friend and have been suffering ever since.

Luckily, I listen to your advice on a regular basis, and I've started having more open conversations about my feelings and my wants and needs. About a year ago, my husband and I decided to open our relationship. This was all my idea, and I'm not sure he's fully into it. We agreed to a "don't ask, don't tell" policy, and a month ago, we finally acted on it. I met someone in an open relationship and had sex with them. It was amazing—everything about it. In the end, I didn't feel guilty, but I did want to tell my husband. I still feel the need to get his approval, but I also know that he doesn't want to hear it. If he gave me the go-ahead, even though everything was my idea, should I feel guilty or just happy for finally getting what I needed from someone? Are there baby steps I can take to tell my husband these things, or do I just keep them to myself? I feel like this is saving our marriage, but society probably just looks at me like a cheating whore.

Feelings Are Insanely, Terribly Hard For Unsure Lovers

You have your husband's approval to do what you did, but his approval was contingent upon you *not telling him* what you did. Honor the commitment you made to your husband, FAITHFUL, by keeping your mouth shut. You'll doubtless have conversations in the future about your relationship and about monogamy, and you can ask him if he wants to stick with "don't ask, don't tell." If he says yes, continue to keep your mouth shut.

I'm a (mostly) straight guy in his mid-twenties. For as long as I can remember, I've loved wearing women's lingerie. It turns me on, but it also makes me feel comfortable. I've never worn women's clothing in public, but I've recently been wearing it more and more around my house. It just feels right! Side note: I've also recently been obsessed with being pegged by my female partner, and I love the reversal of roles. Would I be considered genderqueer, genderfluid or what? And would I be considered part of the LGBT community?

Frequently Excited Miss

Genderqueer and genderfluid aren't kinks, FEM; they're identities. And I don't know what you mean by that parenthetical "mostly" you dropped in there before "straight." If it means you're attracted to dudes—regardless of whether you've ever acted on that attraction—you would indeed be considered part of the LGBT community, under the "B" designation. But if all you meant was "My cock gets hard when I wear panties and think about getting my ass pegged by my girlfriend," then you're just another kinky straight guy.

On the Lovecast (savagebroadcast.com), dating historian Moira Weigel. Contact Dan via email at mail@savagelove.net, and follow him on Twitter: [@fakedansavage](https://twitter.com/fakedansavage).

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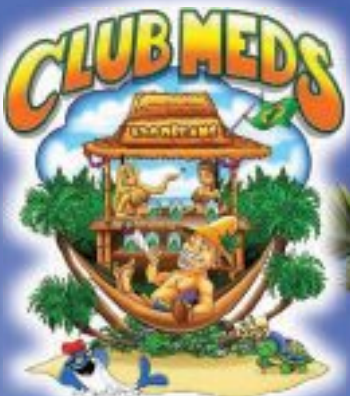
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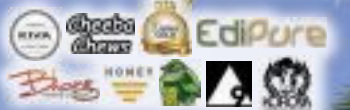


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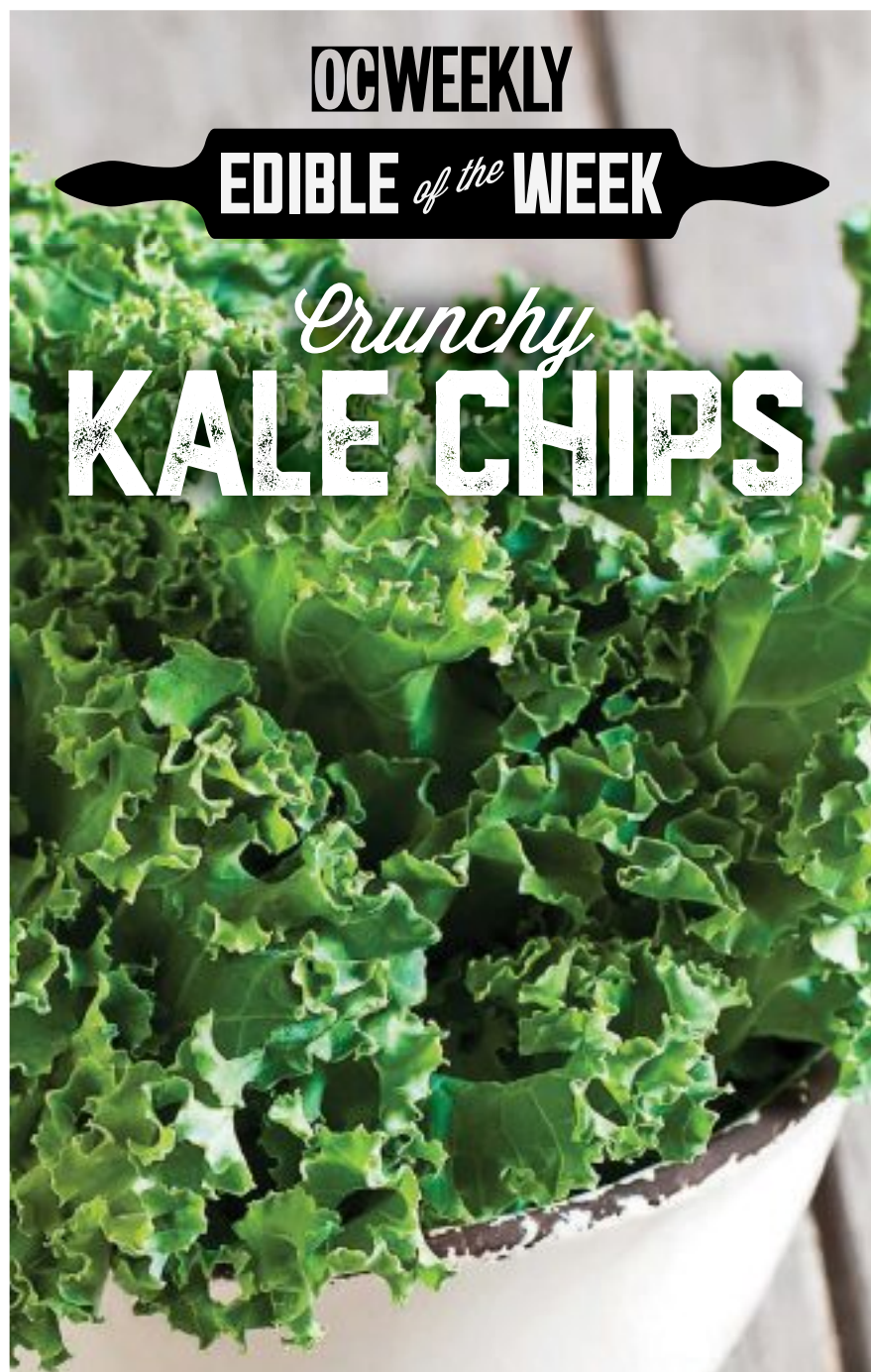
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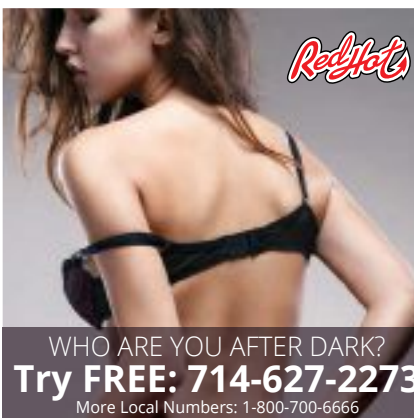
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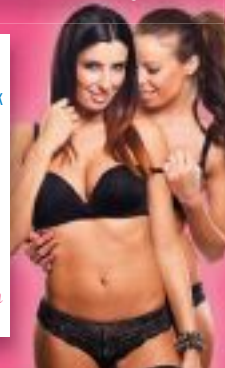
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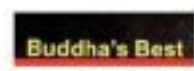
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